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It is generally assumed that the classroom teacher, through verbalization and behavioral cues, communicates to students his expectations for learning behavior in his classroom. An investigation was conducted to analyze the hypothesis that students perceive their teachers' expectations idiosyncratically. In the first study the Watson Analysis Schedule (WAS) was administered to 22 students from a 10th grade world history class toward the end of the school year. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated between students across the 213 items of the WAS. The mean correlation was .204. A second study involving 26 students from another 10th grade world history class replicated the first. The mean correlation coefficient between students was .254. The results support the hypothesis since in the two groups one could expect about 4 percent and 6 percent overlap between two students' perceptions of specific classroom expectations. It would seem, then, that if goals are to be effectively attained, greater effort is necessary on the part of the teacher to communicate specific role expectations for the group goals or that learning procedures and goals need to be individualized to the extent that they can become consistent with individual role expectations. (JS)

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LEVEL OF CONGRUITY FOUND IN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR TEACHER'S EXPECTATIONS

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When the classroom is conceptualized as a social system with specified goals (Getzels and Thelen, 1960) group behavior is dependent upon the efficiency of the communication of expectations. Understanding between role-incumbents is defined as the congruence of the selective interpersonal perceptions; conversely, misunderstanding or conflict is defined as the incongruence of perceptions and the private organization of the prescribed complimentary expectations (Twyman and Biddle, 1963). It has been said that all group processes result in the attainment of group goals only when common goals have been established and individual roles clearly defined (Hanna, 1948).

In the process of education generalizable learning goals are interpreted by the teacher in terms of the expectations for students learning behaviors. These expectations are communicated by the teacher to the students through interaction in the classroom. However, the student internalizes this communication in a form modified by his personal perception (Frick, 1959).

PURPOSE

It is generally assumed that the classroom teacher through verbalization and behavioral cues communicates to the students his expectations for learning behavior in his classroom. However, it has been hypothesized that an individual role-incumbent (e.g., a student) perceives the prescribed

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relationship idiosyncratically. This investigation consists of two separate studies designed to examine this hypothesis in an actual school setting.

METHOD

The general plan of these studies was to administer a self-reported inventory of students' role perceptions and then determine the similarity with which students in the same classroom responded to the specific questions. The Watson Analysis Schedule, Form A, denoted WAS, (Sokol and Marshall, 1968) was selected for use in this study because it is designed to measure these perceived expectations. The inventory consisted of 71 statements repeated on three scales for a total of 213 items. The three scales elecited rated responses in terms of students' perceptions of: (1) what students were told they were expected to do, (2) what students were actually expected to do, and (3) what students actually did. Selected items contained in the WAS are listed in Table 1.

Two grade 10 history classes were selected as samples for this investigation. The inventory was administered to the two classes during late spring, 1968; the researchers felt that the level of congruence among students of perceived classroom expectations should be near its maximum by the end of the academic year. The two classes were treated as separate samples of 22 and 26 students each.

TABLE 1

ILLUSTRATIVE STATEMENTS FROM THE WAS

Item Numbers			Statement
2	73	144	Use a wide range of materials other than the textbook.
8	79	150	Study problems identified by the teacher.
12	83	154	Remember the names, places, events and dates.
19	90	161	Question the accuracy of the facts gathered from the textbook or other sources.
28	99	170	Let the teacher do most of the talking.
28	109	180	Be evaluated only on test scores and required written work.
49	120	191	Use facts to support or reject ideas.
58	129	200	Look for underlying meaning in what is written or said.
67	138	209	Speak frankly in class.
70	141	212	Do unimportant tasks.

RESULTS

The inventoried perceptions of classroom behaviors were analyzed by determining the intercorrelations, across the 213 inventory items, among the students within each sample. Thus, 231 correlations were determined for the first class (22 students taken 2 at a time = 231 arrangements), and 325 correlations were determined for the second class (26 students taken 2 at a time = 325 arrangements). The correlations for the two samples ran from a high of .60 to a low of -.11 with means of .2041 and .2543, respectively. The standard errors were .007 and .006, respectively. The correlations represented an expected commonality for the students in the first class of about 4% and an expected commonality for the students in the second class of about 6%. These results are summarized in Table 2.

DISCUSSIONS

In the first study the expected level of congruence was .204 and in the second study it was .254. In these two groups one could expect about 4% and 6% overlap, respectively, between two students' perceptions of specific classroom expectations.

These low similarities of students' role perceptions (4% and 6% overlap) takes on even greater significance when the time of data collection is taken into consideration. The students involved in this study were <u>not</u> new students; they had been meeting together as a class under the same teacher for an academic year. The students had undergone the same experiences: they had listened to the same teacher presentations, interacted in the same in-class and out-of-class activities, taken the same examinations, and the like. Yet, even after this

TABLE 2

Frequency Distribution of Correlation Coefficients Between Students Across the WAS

r	FREQUENCY	
	Sample #1	Sample #2
+.60	0	1
+.55	0	2
+.50	0	5
+.45	2	10
+.40	10	22
+.35	16	45
+.30	36	50
+.25	37	54
+.20	48	59
+.15	34	39
+.10	18	27
+.05	14	11
.00	12	0
-.05	2	0
-.10	2	0
Number of Students	22	26
Number of Correlations	231	325
Mean Correlation	.204	.254
Standard Deviation	.112	.103
Standard Error	.007	.006

continual interaction there was very little congruity of inventoried perceptions among the students. It may be that the commonality of specific perceptions found reflect nothing more than a small nucleus of overlap among students in their perceptions of general classroom expectations. This would infer that in a given classroom there are as many independent role perceptions as there are students in the class.

Yet, seemingly, the typical classroom teacher operates under the assumptions that (1) the class is functioning in accord with specific group goals and (2) most students perceive the group goals in the same manner. Teachers seem to operate as though students' role perceptions in a given classroom are highly similar. However, these studies indicate that students perceive their teachers' specific expectations idiosyncratically. It would seem, then, that if goals are to be effectively attained greater effort is necessary on the part of the teacher to communicate specific role expectations for the group goals or that learning procedures and goals need to be individualized to the extent that they can become consistent with individual role expectations.

Still another possible implication concerns one of the basic assumptions of group processes. As was previously stated, it is generally assumed that the attainment of group goals is dependent upon the group members clearly establishing common goals. This infers that there has to be congruence among role-incumbents of role perceptions. The results of these studies suggest that an exceedingly low level of congruity may be characteristic among class members. These results raise serious questions concerning the efficiency with which group goals can be attained, or whether or not group goals do exist at all.

SUMMARY

This investigation consisted of two studies designed to analyze the hypothesis that students perceive their teacher's expectations idiosyncratically. The first study involved 22 students drawn from a grade 10 World History class. The Watson Analysis Schedule was administered to the students toward the end of the school year. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated between students, across the 213 items of the WAS. The mean correlation was .204. The second study involved 26 students drawn from another grade 10 World History class. This study was a replication of the first one. The mean correlation coefficient between students, across the 213 items of the WAS, was .254. The results of these studies support the hypothesis that students perceive their teacher's expectations idiosyncratically.

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